

On reading your letter, I see you've put
(Charlotte) into Bowler's hand, so I went to
Monk's House,

MP 3
1920

Good Friday. to W.

Dear Sir,

I was very glad to get your post card,
though some passages were obliterated, I
suppose by the charcoal spray. Here
we are with the bells ringing for church -
Daffodils out - apple trees in blossom - cows
mooing - cocks crowing - thrushes

chirping - this is to move your
companion - I suppose you're sitting in a
Roman street sucking iced soda through a

straw while Duncan, having made
friends with the waiter - & there are
foals, & large spotted dogs - & nice
brown & yellow pots - donkeys - mules -
beautiful ferns for me - as I - I won't
describe it all, as I'd rather you can see
it for yourself. Still I do that for you -

a pang of odious envy. England is
a little soft & rosy all. I
haven't much news, as we've been
here for a week, & our only prospect is

a visit from the Sturgeon family tomorrow -
the possible advent of Jaxon, Nick, & Barbara.
I went in & saw the yellow Bird in bed
with some complaint (nothing much) before
I came away, & as I deposited my humble
oranges in plain paper who should
trip from her taxi but the blue one,
with flower's egg & orchid of course, all ^{done}
in yellow with purple spots ~~with~~ -
& as daring & devilish as I was muffled
& discreet. Well I found her out & from
my moral heights crushed her, I hope -
I doubt it though. Well it's better to be
dodgy in one's own ground than a failure
in hers - & as a matter of fact I was
half-a street away & may have invented the
whole thing. Well, you can imagine -
Oh & the yellow bird is prosperous & perky
upstairs - strewn with compliments -
Then I went & had tea with the children;
it's an illusion to think they wanted me -
nothing of the kind. Julian was lying on
his elbow reading a book, & Quentin
carving a bit of fire wood - the table
strewn with sweets. I could hardly hear

^{them}
 & off to tea. Then we played cards, &
 Angelica came in, & sat on the table as
 good as gold & pulled Julian's hair. -
 Said 'pretty' & 'tick-tock' & was altogether
 lovely & adorable. They all looked flourishing,
 & as Jay had used of us one, though we
 chattered away & Quentin said something
 extraordinarily witty & profound, in my
 style, but I've forgotten what. They had a
 great story of throwing parcels out of the
 window, & how the policeman had been
 in to tell them not to, & they had
 stopped a letter - a very rude letter - to
 Quentin's mistress into the square -
 seen it picked up & delivered - she had
 been very cross to him that morning -
 though they had got a friend to write it
 for them. Fopie was in complete
 charge of every thing, & seemed to
 make her ~~superior~~ herself responsible not
 only for the children but for the list -
 the carpet & Henry & Charleston - like
 death immortality in her usual way.
 I don't think you need feel any compunction
 in staying away. I'm asking Clara whether

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I shant put Charleston in the hands of Wycherley - so far I've had no news from Hampton, & I think W. would be far more likely to produce a tenant.

We had a great splash of people before coming away - dear old Roger & Murray - & a very rich composition of Mr Clifford, Sidney W. & Solie - who came in by chance. More brilliancy is not in it with richness, ripeness & a touch of rottenness. I assure you you must have an element of the decaying South Kensington in your parties - which by the way - light up the horizon for me. And but it's exciting to start a new epoch as you're doing? - not A.D. - I wouldn't say that, oh no - but an entirely new Pagan era, with dear old Adelphe in her many coloured multiplicity presiding & lading out scents & spices from the steaming obscurity - what a sentence! but I've been reading Henry James, & his tells my brain rings & swings - do pictures affect you like that? He stayed in your hotel, by the way, & no doubt wore out some rich leather seat with his rotundity. This, however, you skip; & want to know about Mr Clifford -

who was, indeed, all that you've ever
 imagined her to be - wattle all down her
 neck like some oriental Turkey, -
 with a mouth opening like an old
 leather bag, or the private parts of a
 large cow. Her horses were magnificent -
 about Ruddy Kipling's wedding - & how
 Heinemann came too late with a bouquet -
 a picture Sunday - & how Professor
 Sylvester suddenly sank on his knees on
 the black hearth rug & recited his sonnets
 to her, with Ethel at her breast -
 Then "Yes, a great many young men have
 come to me in their troubles, for a
 lone woman who has once been
 married & considers herself married
 still, is a great help to young men -
 & they all know that Lucy Clifford
 never gives away a secret & never
 speaks harm of a friend" - upon which

We all felt silent - almost robbed - This was to
please explain why the venerable wrote her
memoirs. Moreover, she moves about lurching
all in black, lurching like a huckle that
lost a front leg, so I suppose I shall have to
review her novel again all - their courage &
fertility move my heart to tears. Mr
Ward is dead; less notice has been taken yet
than you would think. He was escorted by
constables to the grave, & old Lucy Clifford was
there, too, of course.

It's too tempting, if you can get me objects
to be sent with your ^{NYPL} - A small table is
what I most want - crockery of any kind -
plates - bowls - cups - only I mustn't spend
since we're plunging wildly - still I can't
resist any small thing sanctified by your taste.

The post said they could insure your coat, but
couldn't warrant its reaching you for some time -
Nelly hadn't done it. I'll let you know if she
sends it. I must now bicycle into Lewes.

Love to Duncan & Maynard

We go back on Wednesday. Y B.
Please write.

HAMILTON 6/1/66

Why doesn't the denigrated old owl - I shall never forget the sight of him hitching
his trousers in the long black overcoat - Duncan, I mean, write to me?
Which Henry James did you read? Give Duncan my love; in fact kiss him.
I then write to your adorable
Nige, B.

2 1920

Hogarth.

Sunday, April, 11th

Dearest,

Our letters seem to take a long time coming - my letters - your postcard.
Well, I'm very grateful for postcards, though it's tantalising to hear only
the names of Susan & Mr Holman Hunt & Packard - I thought Packard
was dead too, which makes it the more exciting to hear that he's in Rome.
I dare say you'll meet Miss Bulley next; & Jack Nicholls. He's a little
obscene - this scratching up of bones by you & Duncan. G.T. Woolley is
dead; 10 minutes before seeing it in the Times I'd been thinking of him.
How do you account for that? You'll be glad to hear that the amorous
Parrots are flourishing. They suddenly proposed a visit at Monk's House -
& came to dinner here instead. Why, when they're together, do they
produce such an atmosphere of the Brighton pier? Something broken &
yet sterile; nothing but double arches & lurching home windows -
pigeons flourish in it; all my sensibilities have salt dropped on them.
I think I feel this more & more, & if you did your duty as a wife, you'd
provide another mistress. I think Clive ought to have a change. I've
nothing against them separately - indeed I thought Mary humane &
even pathetic, like a small kitten - But turn this over in your
mind. We only came back on Wednesday, so that I've not much
news. James is setting up a Theatre. He's going to start with
Rommersholm, & has offered Leonard a part - which I think he ought to take,
& thus change his life, since he's bent on changing his life. It - the new
Theatre - is quite a serious affair - it's to be the most perfect of all theatres,
& already all the actors are engaged. Meanwhile Alex is
setting up a photographic studio, the point of which is that a
million candles flash in your face, & thus absolute truth is far obtained -
no sentimental evasions - what they call facing facts. He told me that
he is now very happy. Fredgent, on the other hand, is not happy; at least

I expect she is really, but you know what it is to have remorse on the death of a parent. She had a reconciliation with Florence however, shortly before, & is now going through all the family papers - means of letters from Grammy to Aubrey de Vere. By the way, I had a letter from Margaret Duckworth the other day, who has also been going through family papers & found about 50 Bedford photographs of father, which she sends me, & says I'm to share them with you, & George is fearfully busy, & the spring has been so wonderful this year, & the hopes we are all well - so I said you were in Rome with Duncan. Nelly has finished your coat, but has not sent it, & will keep it for you. It is the pride of her life: a very fine foxlike work, picked out with some old buttons of mine. Oh I must tell you how much I admire your picture - I think it one of your finest - such a solid, entirely impersonal, - - I see my command over artistic language is still too poor to let me launch out. What I mean is "starry": do you understand? ^{NYPL} No buy me grey gloves; but I know buying is much harder than it sounds, so don't think that you must bring me back something - but if you saw a small bright piece of china, cheap but vivid that's what I want for Monk's House. I daresay they do the heads of celebrities in earthenware. I have a sort of feeling that poor Moll MacCarthy is very unhappy; Desmond has asked me to act as dramatic critic, & I'm going to a play tonight for the first time for 15 years; but I don't suppose Moll is in the least unhappy, only, poor woman, with her ears cut off, more like a Squirrel in the dark than ever. Talking of Squirrels, we were kept awake till 4 this morning by mice in our bedroom. At last Leonard started to make his bed, & a mouse sprang out from his blanket, whereupon he had a wet dream - you can't think what his sheets are like this morning. And what can Lotty think of it? You, & who know so much about the minds of the lower classes, can perhaps say. When are the children coming back? It's no good pretending that they want to see me: it's awful to find that I'm beginning to want to see them, & to want them to want to see me. That's how it begins, & we all know how it ends. Still, Angelica - then there's Quentin - & I find Julian very interesting - so like a brother with Angelica. "Now I'll get you a chair, & then you can't drop your silver paper on the floor" so then she pulled his hair. which didn't prevent him from going on reading. Much like the day nursery at H.P.G.

1920

Hogarth House.

April 15th

Dearest,

You are well advised not to be in this dreary country. It rains & blows & the sky is black as dirty water. Then our only Dutchess is dead — do you see that in the paper? Cousin Adeline, I mean; — never again shall we have a cousin in the Dukeries. It will be a great blow to George. I like to think of his appearance at the funeral, which is at Chenies. There is a good deal doing in the art world. A show of Negro carvings at the Book Club — the X Group — pictures in Shaftesbury Avenue, & the entire works of Bach played; Beethoven next week. I went to see the carvings & I found them dismal & impressive, but Heaven knows what real feeling I have about anything after hearing Roger discourse. Truly so that something in their style might be written, & also that if I had one on the mantelpiece I should be a different sort of character — less adorable, as far as I can make out, but somebody you wouldn't forget in a hurry. But then an unknown young man wrong me by the hand — Hannay he said he was — & Desmond came in with a highly respectable male aristocrat, of whom I could see he was mightily ashamed. — as I should be ashamed if you passed me by when I was walking with Eliza Richmond. How much simpler life is for ^{painters} artists! How can I possibly afford not to know South Kensington? You can't think how much this problem puzzles me — the humanity of South Kensington, I mean. You see, to go to the grave with that problem unsolved would be a bitter failure in my life. If you see me kick & stir in my death bed, that'll be it. Adrian & Karin have sent out cards for a large evening party on the 28th, I think; so you want to be back; & I dare say it's a kind of assertion of independence on their part. I shall try to go, but not in

the same spirit that I bound up your flight, - still always expecting a romance at the top, whereas, in the case of the Stephens, I feel that I'm the romance. It's really very dismal now that you're away, I didn't think I should miss you so much. There's no consolation to be had in my style, - I have to have my tea at the 17 Club, - altogether there's something about Dolphin & her ménage that can't be matched. For their ridiculous comedy party, of course, for you're not altogether in the high class style - a poor old Duncan, well - there's a good deal to be said about him. The Athenaeum has ceased to talk about Wyndham Lewis. On the other hand, they've adopted Katherine as their writer of fiction, which means, I'm afraid, that poor Mr. Woolf - but we writers are never jealous. Thank Heaven, I say to myself that fiction has arisen, though not in my particular headpiece. Whereas, what your painter says is - but I'd much rather hear about Susan Lushington. So tell me, not in a postcard, the whole history of your liaison, - what your future relations are to be; & whether she had to swallow scraps to have tea with you. I'm sure she got over them in fine style; what I remember chiefly about her is that she had to move in after 5 minutes, because her head piece gave out; then she took to sitting high chairs. Is this still true?

We came in to find Nick - a young Mr. Wright, son of a Dorsetshire clergyman, here the other day. Nick is a fearful wily brute now; like a rheumatic labourer. I can't conceive any fate I should like less than to be his wife. By the way, shaking my dirty clothes basket the other morning, a dead mouse dropped out - starved to death. Nelly believes that I brought him home from Monk's House in my petticoats. Lottie says if she had shaken him out of her petticoats she would have died. This is about all the news there is. We are sending out Logan's book, & Hopes poem, & printing Morgan's story, so we're rather busy. Plenty of time though to read letters from Rome.

Gr B.

Monk House,
~~April~~ May 1st

Dearest,

Need I say that your letter has entirely changed the face of nature to me? The cock has thrown itself upon the hen, & the hen brist the blossom. We are here for the week end, expecting Desmond, whom we've tried to put off, so I suppose he is certain to come. You will be glad to hear that London has been very dismal the whole of April, wet, black, sodden, sinful; Walter Lamb my only adventure, & 'Clive will tell you all about him. Poor Prince Albert is 'backward' - that is all he had to tell me, save a little gossip about one of the servants, who has married a farmer, & Walter has taken room for them at Hounslow - no, that was Miss Saxton Noble, I think - We dined with Clive the other night, old by then was there, & his eyes have turned blue & his beard red & white; I heard him whispering secrets to Mary, & I think something happened in the Spanish Chamber though what I don't guess. If I felt sure that you wouldn't breathe a word of it to Clive & Mary I'd tell you about Gertler, & his revelations. You remember the little affair 2 years ago, when my character was blackened? Gertler has another another version which throws all the blackness elsewhere; but I can say no more, & I don't think I can face a meeting with Gertler which would be necessary to set it all straight. He wishes to clear himself.

Do you want a man & wife at Charleston? A couple here want a place as house keeper & gardener; the man an old sailor; woman seemed respectable; & they only want enough pay to live on. I've heard nothing from Hampton.

Ka has had a go, the doctor couldn't be got; & she was very bad, but is
 now better - but this interests you not at all; & yet the mere mention
 of Susan suffices me with crimson. The lily of valley from her
 bosom was a superb touch; but what colour is the? Does it
 turn a blackish purple, that particular red in age? & her hair?
 & Does she still wear green regains at night? There was a
 dreadful party at Adrian's the other night - entirely composed of
 different versions of Mr. Beresford & Aunt Lou, in full evening dress,
 hale & buxom & breezy, but not really answering to those
 names. Heaven knows who they were, & then Hope came in, but
 the affectations of that young woman! Why, I've written novels
 I've been a beauty, I know Greek, & yet - I thought the difference
 very marked. She improved later, I'm told. Karin, was as I
 see, has made up her mind to show her spots - if that's the expression -
 I mean not to go in for art, so there was no nonsense, &
 Adrian in evening dress, but it is much better like that;
 & I am going to tea with her to see the children. & one of these days
 you will be surprised to find how much nearer Karin is than
 any one else.

I must now go & paint the house bright yellow. As you'll
 never come here, I can give my taste full rein. The curtains at
 10 farth are an immense success, & convey the illusion that we
 are grasshoppers sitting on a vine leaf, which was what I wanted.
 If newish has to do with the nerves, Florence will be fatal to it;
 at least the climate always drives me to thoughts of suicide;
 but I hope Paris may be good for it - & I don't know what it is
 except that my dentist suffers from it owing to using his arm -
 But please come home anyhow, & kiss me all over.
 master of the post card Duncan is! - his style, I mean: I mean himself.
 Kiss him where the - but I must stop.

YB.

HARVEY 2/10/68

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1920

Mink's House

Sunday

Dearest,

I'll come over one day the week after this -
 & spend the night, but I can't be quite sure which.
 I'll let you know - perhaps Tuesday or Wednesday.

I don't think Wells is coming, but L. says he
 can easily find the address if you can wait till we're
 in London. It's probably in Whitaker.

(Your Nelly has just arrived; & found us in the
 greatest mess. Lottie having washed her arm & so
 on) Nelly has been examined at the

hospital & they say there's nothing whatever
 wrong except her teeth, & she's going to have
 them done, & I suppose she may believe it for a
 time.

Lynnie & I went to Kingston yesterday & saw
 the beautiful Ruth Humphreys, now Beagle - to
 me a little disappointing - but then she was
 running along the road carrying her baby.

I'll give you my

Review of the visit when I come -

We shall go back the week after you - It
 Seems a great pity : I do hope (as our great Aunt
 says) that your arm is better. Lytton thought
 you looked tired. Do my dearest lovely Dolphin
 take care of yourself, & don't start all the
 work of London ~~and~~ ^{get} overtired & get ill. All the
 burdens fall on you, I feel. My only burden
 an approaching visit from John & Dodo.
 Mixed with Eliza I expect it will be pretty bad
 though.

Love to Duncan

J. B.